

# In Celebration Journal

## In Celebration of the *GSCA Journal*

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### Abstract

This article presents the readers with the historical perspective of the *GSCA Journal* from its initiation to the present. Additionally, the article reports on many of the achievements of each editor and is meant to celebrate their work. Their efforts created a publication that is highly professional.

### In Celebration of the *GSCA Journal*

This being the 15<sup>th</sup> edition of the *GSCA Journal*, it seems fitting to celebrate the work that has gone on to make the *Journal* the success it is today. Without the dream of a publication by the first editor Pat Marr and President Elect Ginger Little to celebrate the work of school counseling practitioners and counselor educators across the state, our *Journal* might not have come to fruition. Georgia's professional school counselors (PSCs) are fortunate because many states still have no journal to demonstrate the effectiveness of their work with children. It is with much respect that we commemorate the hard work of our past editors, their reviewers, and the leadership teams which have supported this endeavor. From its commencement in 1991 with the publication of a few articles every other year, the *GSCA Journal* has grown to the quality peer reviewed *Journal* it is today. Recently, a researcher in Arizona, who completed a study on school counselors in Georgia, discussed with GSCA leaders and the editor the possibility of seeking publication in the next issue of the *Journal*. We are known, ladies and gentlemen, and it is due to the wonderful efforts of your past editors, reviewers, and of course the authors, who were willing to take the time to write about their work. The purpose of

this article is to share the historical background about the *GSCA Journal* and to celebrate the work of past editors as they initiated, developed, and refined the *Journal*. They have done a great job and deserve our thanks.

### Historical Perspectives

When Ginger Little was president (1990-1991) she and Pat Marr had a vision that professional school counselors (PSCs) across the state could present the great work that they do through a publication. While the opportunity for presenting their work was available at the annual conferences, not every PSC finds he/she is able to attend each year, thus it was felt that a publication sharing ideas and best practices could reach every member of the Georgia School Counselors Association. Because Georgia's were such winners at the ASCA national level due to their innovative ideas, Pat felt it was time to share these ideas around the state in a professional publication. The foresightedness of these leaders has created an outstanding publication to showcase the work of PSCs and is to be respected. We owe much to Pat and Ginger's collaboration on this initiative.

### In the Beginning

Pat Marr and Glenda Almand were the pioneers for the *GSCA Journal* gearing it toward the publication it is today. It was because of their perseverance and patience with the process, the reviewers who sometimes needed nudging to complete their reviews and the periodic lack of manuscripts, that the *Journal* survived. Currently we have more than enough manuscripts to share with our members. Initially, the *GSCA Journal* was only published

# In Celebration *Journal*

every 2 years and was printed in half page format. Today the *Journal* looks different from the original publication but this has evolved after several previous changes in the printed format. The *Journal* was initially printed on linen paper and today has a slick new look but while the format for presentation is impressive the writing that has evolved over the years is more impressive. The authors have courageously been willing to encounter a rigorous review process of their manuscripts. Additionally, the authors generally have been open to the revisions suggested by the reviewers because the revisions strengthen the manuscripts.

When Pat Marr was asked to be the editor by then President Ginger Little, Pat contacted the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) for help learning about the publication process and suggestions for submission guidelines. Thus the *GSCA Journal* was patterned on the ASCA publication at that time. The main obstacle that Pat encountered as editor was the lack of confidence by school counselors to write about their work, thus she felt one of the highlights of her editorship was encouraging practitioners to write about their work. Pat felt her major achievement as editor was the very act of seeing it come to fruition. Simply stated, the organization and work to get it off the ground was a huge accomplishment. While the leadership team, reviewers, and members were enthusiastic and supported the need for a publication, the work was significant and it was accomplished with little training in the publication process, yet Pat feels the editorship provided the perfect opportunity to learn new ideas while utilizing her background in Language Arts. Pat's aspiration for the future of the *Journal* is the wish to enter the *Journal* into an appropriate competition to display the impressive work of our writers and editorial staff. Bottom line for Pat is the fact that publishing the work of our many practitioners, counselors-in-training, and counselor educators helps benefit the children of the state of Georgia and perhaps beyond as our work is shared with our readers.

Glenda Almand began as a reviewer for the *Journal* before following Pat as editor. Glenda felt the publication of the first issue under her editorship, which was the second *GSCA Journal* issue, was important because it demonstrated the permanence of the *Journal*. Glenda reflected that faithful members who wrote manuscripts, competent reviewers who gave great suggestions, and a wonderful printer who designed the setup, while coping with GSCA's needs, were the true "heroes" for the success of the *Journal*. As the *Journal*

became known and fears dissipated about writing skills, more authors tried their hand at writing and the *Journal* began to have more articles. Glenda noted her greatest accomplishment, while editor, was "putting the baby to bed" because the work of getting all of the items together and in the mail to the printer was a challenge but very worthwhile. Glenda would like to see more people read the *Journal*, not just receive it in the mail and put it aside. She feels the *Journal* is a great undertaking and one in which our professional school counselors should be proud.

## ***Those Who Followed***

*Jim Bergin.* Jim Bergin became the 3<sup>rd</sup> editor and served for 4 years from 1995-1999 in that capacity. Jim's major purpose for the *Journal* was as a public relations tool to showcase data in order to demonstrate that PSCs are effective at what they are doing. When Jim took the reins, the *Journal* was only published every other year and presented 6 or 7 articles. One of Jim's greatest accomplishments as editor was to contact presenters who received good reviews at the annual GSCA conference, and ask them to write articles about their presentations. This initiative increased the number of articles; sometimes as many as 13 articles were published in a given year. During Jim's last year as editor, the *Journal* won an award from ASCA.

Jim's original idea when restructuring the *Journal* was to help PSCs who had not published become published, therefore he created a column "*Practical Ideas for Counselors*". The purpose of the column was to share novel ideas by writing about them. He hoped that PSCs, while becoming acclimated to the writing process, would use the column as a stepping stone or precursor to writing a full article. Jim also hoped the person who was column editor would become the next editor for the *Journal*.

*Fran Mullis.* The editor following Jim was Fran Mullis, who served as editor not once but twice. Fran served as editor from 1999-2001 and from 2005-2006. Fran continued Jim's idea about choosing highly rated presentations from the GSCA conference and asking the presenters to write about their topics. Fran shared that it was an honor to serve on the Leadership Team and to see first-hand the dedication and hard work of GSCA's leaders. Fran especially liked having the column that Dana Edwards edited on professional school counselor practices. The column provided an opportunity for PSCs to briefly share activities that they found successful. It

# In Celebration *Journal*

was also very rewarding to Fran to hear how pleased and excited many of the newly published authors were to see their work in print. Fran would like to see a continued emphasis in the *Journal* on research related articles and the column on practices that work reinstated. For the school counseling profession, her hopes are that professional school counselors will be recognized for the great work they do in helping students succeed in all life skills.

*Susan McCarthy.* Susan was editor from 2002-2003. Highlights from her tenure as editor include the focus on the National Standards for School Counselors in the 2002 issue followed by the spotlight on the ASCA National Model implementation articles in the 2003 *Journal* edition. Susan worked arduously to get more practitioners to submit articles for publication in both editions. She feels her best accomplishment for the *Journal* was keeping up the great tradition of providing a quality professional *Journal* for the membership even though she had no major experience in publishing research based articles. Susan is proud of the work it took to bring the *Journal* to life each year. Susan's wish for the *Journal* is to continue as a practitioner's tool for PSCs in the state of Georgia. She feels this will be accomplished as the *Journal* continues to publish both research and practitioner based articles. She thinks the current format continues to be an easy to read format and doesn't see the need for change. Her sincere wish is that the Georgia School Counselors Association continues to see the benefit of publishing the *Journal* on a regular basis.

*Erin Mason.* Erin served a 1-year term (2004) and while it was short she believes it was a tremendous learning experience. Erin felt she gained unsurpassable respect for the process of publishing and for all the responsibilities editors are charged with doing. She learned that editing requires much more than one might expect and creating a cohesive, professional product is a labor of love. Erin feels GSCA is fortunate to have a professional *Journal* as there are many state organizations that do not have such a publication. She would like to see the *Journal* continue its tradition and to see more practitioners contribute articles highlighting their school counseling projects.

## ***Into the Future***

*Susan Boes.* As the current editor of the *GSCA Journal* in my second year, I am pleased to be given the freedom to make changes to the *Journal* with the support of the Leadership Team. Being able to choose reviewers, whose work I know or have heard of, is an additional privilege

because it is important to understand how my team works as a whole. Additionally, being given the chance to add an editorial assistant to my team has been a real blessing. By offering an advanced graduate student in the specialist program, the opportunity to help with the *Journal* has allowed Hope Munro, last year, and Elizabeth Goff Hatcher, this year, an opportunity to learn the publishing process but more so it has helped me with my job as editor. The tasks of reading and rereading the manuscripts, checking for grammatical errors and typos, and concentrating on APA format are so tedious that another set of eyes is wonderful. The efforts of an editorial assistant also help from the perspective of another view when the reviewers' comments need to be discerned. Both editorial assistants have served the *Journal* well and I hope future editors will have the good fortune to have this additional help. My wish for the future of the *Journal* is to give it more exposure. By opening the *Journal* at our website, the *Journal* will have more impact because it will have national and possibly international exposure. Not only will PSCs from around the nation be able to review the work of our authors but this exposure will open the author's work to readers in other fields as well.

Having the Leadership Team allow me the freedom to make changes to the format and look of the *Journal* as a whole, as long as it is within budget, is also appreciated. But while the look is new the concepts are not. As editor, I am committed to presenting the work of practitioners, school counselors-in-training, and counselor educators. Professional school counselors in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century are held accountable to many stakeholders. As the times have changed, PSCs are asked to perform many roles quite different from the roles taught in their training programs so it is especially important to keep abreast of the trends and issues in the field. This medium extends the opportunity to write about what works to benefit our students in the schools which is our goal as PSCs. Therefore I applaud the efforts of the authors who put their writing out for review because it can be scary to have one's work scrutinized within the review process. While the purpose of the reviews is to strengthen the article, it means having others judge our work. My reviewers are committed to working with authors to make revisions that strengthen the manuscripts and they take their role seriously.

Finally, let me share with members that we welcome works other than theoretical pieces, research based manuscripts, and best practice documents. This issue

# In Celebration *Journal*

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offers a book review that can be a valuable edition to one's library. Others have asked about the publication of a poem. This can also benefit our work and all your creative ideas are welcome.

## Parting Words

This article presented a brief synopsis of the developmental growth of the *Journal*. The historical perspective of future sighted leaders has carried the *Journal* into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with sometimes minor and at other times more core changes. Yet, each new focus has added to the professional development of school counselors across the state and ultimately to the benefit of our children in the schools. The *Journal* has served as an instrument to highlight the work of school counselors, school counseling candidates, and counselor educators. Each theoretical article, research study, or best practice presentation has the potential for practitioners to better their scope of practice. The work of the many authors,

the review board members, and past editors are to be applauded. The *Journal*, as noted by the comments of the past editors is highly valued and truly is as one past editor noted "a labor of love", however the *Journal* cannot stand on past claims, it needs your manuscripts to describe the work that you do, so please share this by writing about your work.

## Author's Note

*Life for Erin Mason includes a new professional experience as she recently became an assistant professor at DePaul University in Chicago. Erin worked for 13 years as a school counselor in the greater Atlanta area and completed a doctorate in Counselor Education from Georgia State University. Her current aspirations are to continue to contribute to the field of school counseling through teaching, scholarship and professional advocacy. We wish her the best of luck. Illinois has gained a leader.*